

IN THE CLAIMS

1-4. Canceled.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59 whereby nitric oxide levels within the barn during curing approximate that of ambient, environmental air surrounding the barn.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59 whereby the barn is equipped with a heat exchange unit.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59 whereby the barn is equipped with an electrical heating unit.

8-58. Canceled.

59. (Currently Amended) A method for modifying a tobacco curing barn provided with a direct fire heating unit for the purpose of providing conditions suitable for curing tobacco such that resulting cured tobacco obtained from said barn possesses a tobacco-specific nitrosamine content lower than 2 parts per million, the method comprising:

removing the direct fire heating unit from the tobacco barn,

providing the tobacco barn with a heating unit that does not generate exhaust gases comprising nitric oxides in a fashion that would cause contact between said nitric oxides and said tobacco within said barn, and further modifying said barn to ensure that the nitric oxide level within the barn during tobacco curing is suppressed to prevent formation of tobacco-specific nitrosamines ~~permit correlation of the tobacco-specific nitrosamine content of said cured tobacco with the actual level of nitric oxides to which said tobacco is exposed in said barn, wherein said barn as modified may be used for the curing of tobacco leaves.~~